

OPEN LETTERS.

"Nature of the binary name," again.

Professor Greene does me an unmerited honor in discussing so fully my humble suggestion respecting the nature of the binary name. I asked if the name of a plant is one word or two. Professor Greene's reply is most ingenious and one which, I must admit, had never occurred to me. His chief reply is in the form of a suppositious case. He supposes that I could lecture for an hour or more on *Carex*, and mention any number of species, and yet not even once use the word *Carex*; therefore, the specific name is, in that case, *the name* of the plant. Very well; I might so lecture (to empty seats, of course); but my hearer (if, perchance, I should have one) would know that the word *Carex* is understood in every case. The group and the name of that group would be constantly in his mind. But if one were lecturing upon distribution of plants, morphology, or a dozen other botanical subjects, he would be obliged to use the generic name whenever he used a specific name, and both words—the combination—would appeal to every hearer as *the name*. It is a mere incident, it seems to me, whether the generic name is expressed or understood: in either case, both words are assumed as coordinate parts of the conception of a plant name.

I am sorry to be so obtuse and insistent. But I hope that Professor Greene will kindly help me still further out of my difficulty. The question which was propounded seems to me to be central to the whole nomenclatorial controversy. It seemed so five years ago, when I first ventured the proposition; but the fact that no one took up the issue seemed to show that my trouble was simply a personal perplexity and devoid of merit in itself.—L. H. BAILEY, *Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y.*